

Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources Water Guards



New Water Guard Bill Her

Photo by Jerry Davis

DNR WATER GUARD PROGRAM: Protecting Wisconsin's Waterways

Wisconsin's natural resources are critically important to our state. Ultimately, most everything we care about is a subsidiary of our natural resources - the air we breathe, water we drink, our health, our economy, and the outdoor recreational opportunities we have available to us.

Our future vitality requires we protect our natural resources. Wisconsin's waterways are a critical natural resource, and they are under attack by a host of invasive species. These organisms have the potential to displace our native aquatic organisms and alter the aquatic ecosystems that support them. Wisconsin citizens have expressed their concern about aquatic invasive species and want to protect our waterways against these invasives.

"Protecting Wisconsin's waterways and our native wildlife on behalf of future generations will require we meet the challenge presented by aquatic invasive species," said DNR Chief Warden Randy Stark. "Our Water Guard program is one of the ways we are meeting that challenge."

Successfully combating invasives will require anglers, waterfowl hunters, boaters, and other waterway users to adopt new behaviors so as not to infect new waters. To this end, the DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement has 10 Water Guards stationed across the state who focus exclusively on creating a climate of compliance with laws designed to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

This newsletter will provide information on the program and introduce you to the 2010 Water Guards who will be working to protect Wisconsin's waterways from aquatic invasive species.

Mission: *To protect, enhance and promote the safe and wise use of our natural resources through enforcement, education and community based wardening that guarantees fair and equal treatment.*



Cover photo: New Water Guard Bill Her, talks with fishermen on the Wisconsin River about fishing and bait regulations. Photo to the left: Deputy Warden Water Guard John Preuss inspects a boat for any aquatic plants still attached. Above photo: Water Guard Justin Wershofen reiterates the importance of removing aquatic vegetation before leaving and to the right, a concerned citizen pulls off aquatic plants from their boat trailer, and Photo lower left: A Water Guard washes off a boat ...all in an effort to stop the spread of aquatic invasives.

Coming to a boat landing near you...

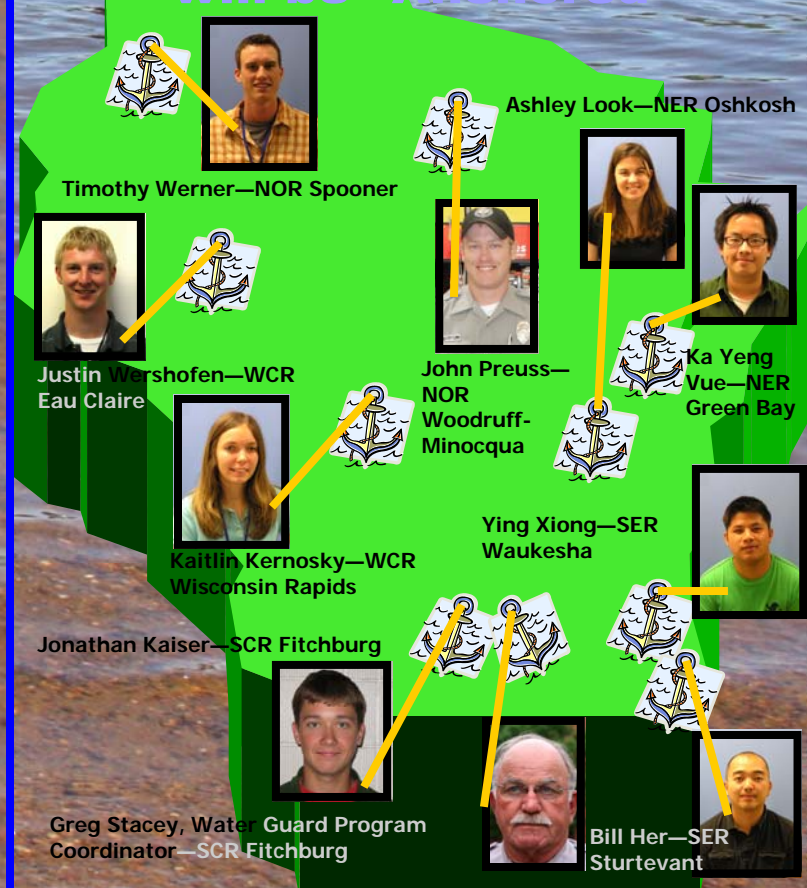
Ten Water Guards were trained and sent to regions where they were most needed in 2008. Three of those Water Guards are still in place. Seven more were trained in 2010 to replace those who have left, some for other DNR positions.

Greg Stacey, DNR Deputy Warden, coordinates the Water Guard program. The second class recently completed their training at the State Patrol Academy at Fort McCoy, the same facility where recruit Wardens are trained annually to replace retiring field Wardens.

When the Water Guards completed their training, they were sent to assigned stations across the state and are being supervised by Area Warden Supervisors in those regions.



Where the Water Guards will be "Anchored"



Strategic Goal #6— Lead, adapt and manage the organization to achieve our mission while providing our people with fulfilling careers.

APPLICATION AND HIRING PROCESS

The application and hiring processes for an LTE Deputy Warden–Water Guard are similar, but abbreviated, compared to becoming a permanent Conservation Warden.

First applicants' education and experience are assessed using an online application, followed by an examination.

Candidates take a written entry level law enforcement assessment, followed by demonstrating a basic identification knowledge of native species, invasive species and recreational equipment.

Candidates are then interviewed by a three-member panel, which this year included an out-of-state Conservation Warden that could assist with the Hmong language assessments. These applicants prepare and then present an aquatic species lecture demonstration. Hmong language skills are assessed for the Hmong candidates. English language and communication skills are assessed for all applicants.

Offers are then made to the number of Water Guards able to be hired. In 2010, seven were hired, two of which were women, and three of the men were Hmong. Our Water Guards who happen to be Hmong will help us with liaison relations with the Hmong community, who commonly enjoy fishing and recreating on Wisconsin's waters.

Extensive background investigations, medical exams and drug testing are done before they are certified as a Deputy Warden Water Guard.



We're Hiring Water Guards to
Protect our Aquatic Resources for

Everyone's Enjoyment...



What Can You Do to Help
Stop the Spread?

- ✓ Inspect
- ✓ Clean
- ✓ Drain



...Or it won't be long and these aquatic criminals will be robbing us of our natural "water-parks".

Don't let them anchor on, get a hold and steal what belongs to all of us.

Eurasian Water Milfoil



AQUATIC INVASIVES

What a few of these aquatic culprits look like:

Red Swamp Crayfish



Zebra Mussels



Why they are a problem: They are being charged with getting caught up and tangled in motors and equipment... limiting where people can navigate in waterways. Filtering plankton, which then changes the food source and increases the sunlight at certain depths not allowing shelter or food in certain areas. Reproducing so fast, they are devouring the food supply. We can't afford to let these invaders invade any more! They are guilty as charged and must not be moved to cause damage elsewhere! **INSPECT > CLEAN > DRAIN!**

INTENSE TWO-WEEK TRAINING AT FORT MCCOY

Each class of new Water Guards interacts with staff and guest presenters during an intensive two-week training session at Fort McCoy, in Monroe County. Then they hit the beaches, shores, river banks and public events' scheduled during the summer and fall.

In addition to bringing their college and personal backgrounds to the position, the Water Guards hear DNR staff and invited guests discuss and demonstrate necessary experiences these Water Guards must understand to be successful stewards of the natural resources.

Because the Water Guards' main thrust is aquatic invasive species and diseases, current invasive species laws are discussed, including species identification. Watercraft inspections, including where these organisms may hitchhike, are highlighted.

Talking with the public during a variety of venues is a large part of the Water Guards' responsibilities, so interviewing skills, constitutional law, communication skills and media relations are discussed and acted out in various scenarios. Sometimes it is necessary for these Water Guards to write citations, so those procedures are discussed and practiced in detail.

Fishing and boating rules and regulations, as well as local town, village and city ordinances are important to understand, too.

Water Guards must file weekly reports and know how to operate the equipment issued to them, including their vehicles.



*New Water Guard—Ashley Look
getting computer training*

Photos by Jerry Davis



*New 2010 Water
Guards receive
class training at
Ft. McCoy.*

WATERWAY PROTECTION AND RECRUITMENT AT THE SAME TIME

"The Water Guard Program achieves two important goals simultaneously" according to Chief Warden Stark. "First, we accomplish important work of protecting our waterways from aquatic invasive species. And second, the Water Guard Program acts as a recruiting tool for full time Conservation Warden positions and other full time DNR jobs."

The Water Guard program creates a great way to find out if someone has what it takes to become a Conservation Warden by having them do parts of that job, and at the same time get some very important work done for the State's aquatic natural resources. "We've learned over time that not everyone has the desire or necessary attributes to be a Conservation Warden," he said. "By providing opportunities for people to work as Water Guards, it gives them and us an opportunity to see if the fit might match other needs of the Department."

In order for a Water Guard to become a field Warden, much more extensive training is necessary.

Three of the 2010 recruit warden class were part of the first Water Guard program in 2008. Mac Hannon, one of the 2010 full time recruit Wardens, said he owes much of what he is today to first being a Water Guard. "You get to run your own program and you have to maintain your own schedule as a Water Guard."

In addition to helping Mac gain professional experience, he is now very well trained to function in the role of invasive species watchdog after he is assigned his field station next year.

Meet the 2010 Water Guards



BILL HER was encouraged to pursue a conservation position in the DNR by Conservation Warden John Buss. Bill attended MATC in Milwaukee. He has worked as a Security Officer at Potawatomi Bingo and Casino. He hopes someday to have a permanent DNR position and is looking forward to making a difference by working in law enforcement in the Water Guard program. Bill is stationed in Sturtevant in the Southeast Region for his first new assignment. He lives in Milwaukee with his wife and daughter.

JONATHAN KAISER is from Hastings, Minn. and is a junior studying resource management and law enforcement at UW-Stevens Point. Jonathan also works as a dispatcher and cadet at UW-Stevens Point during the school year. Several people encouraged him to consider applying to become a DNR employee because of his wide interests in outdoors and conservation. He enjoys hunting, fishing, camping and snowboarding. Listening to music, attending concerts and motorcycling occupy some of his free time. Preserving natural resources, working hard at any task and helping others, as well as pursuing his dream of becoming a field Warden, are life goals. He is stationed in Fitchburg/Madison in the South Central Region for 2010.



KAITLIN KERNOSKY received a BA in criminal justice from St. Cloud University in Minnesota. She decided to become a Water Guard after completing an internship with Conservation Wardens in the Wisconsin River Team. She has a host of outdoors interests and experiences, including working at Granite Peak Ski Area, and playing hockey, rugby, lacrosse, golf and skiing. She also volunteers, fishes and snowmobiles and is a self-taught drummer. Kaitlin's first assignment as a Water Guard is in Wisconsin Rapids in the West Central Region.

ASHLEY LOOK, a junior at UW-Stevens Point, majoring in resource management-law enforcement, is stationed in Oshkosh in the Northeast Region as a new Water Guard. In addition to her resources major, Ashley will have a Spanish minor when she graduates. She worked as a Trail Ranger at Schmeckle Reserve in Stevens Point and as a Community Advisor in the UW-Stevens Point dormitories. She was encouraged by Conservation Warden Mike Neal to apply for this opportunity and hopes to someday be a field Warden. Ashley believes this experience as a Water Guard will help her reach that goal. When she's not working and studying, she enjoys volunteering, exercising, hunting, fishing, reading and listening to music.

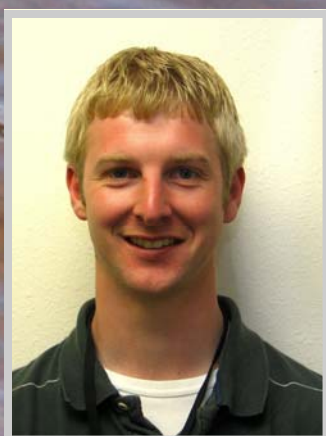


JOHN PREUSS grew up on a dairy farm near Elroy, Wisconsin. He attended college at UW-Stevens Point, majoring in wildlife management and minoring in environmental law enforcement. He has worked with terrestrial invasive species at Fort McCoy. His father shared with him his knowledge about hunting, fishing, respect for the environment and appreciation of the outdoors. Camping, running and biking are a few of his recreational pursuits. His ultimate goal is to become a DNR Conservation Warden. Since 2008, John has been a Water Guard at Woodruff in the Northern Region, where he continues to meet outdoors recreationalists who are conscientious about keeping Wisconsin's waters free of invasive species.



KA YENG VUE has a criminal justice/law enforcement degree from Northwest Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay. He was born in Thailand and moved to Green Bay. Ka Yeng hopes to help improve DNR/community relations, including lessening misunderstandings about laws and regulations. His mentors have included Yia Thao, a club advisor, and Dick Campbell, who he worked with on controlling invasive plants. Ka Yeng enjoys working and spending time with people, and recently served as President of the Asian American Student Association, where he also served as an Officer Mentor while in college. He continues to work as an Interpreter for International Relations in Green Bay. Ka Yeng's first assignment is in Green Bay in the Northeast Region.

TIMOTHY WERNER came to Wisconsin from Monroe, Michigan and received a natural resources degree from Northland College in Ashland, with an emphasis in fish and wildlife ecology and management. He interned with the US Geological Survey and US Fish and Wildlife Service. His father, a Monroe, Michigan Police Officer, has encouraged Tim to pursue a law enforcement career. Tim is an avid waterfowl hunter and angler and enjoys boating, camping and hiking. He continues to be interested in hockey, because he was a varsity player during college. Tim is stationed in Spooner in the Northern Region for his new assignment.



JUSTIN WERSHOFEN is from Holmen, Wisconsin and attended nearby Winona State University and Western Technical College in La Crosse. He majored in biology and graduated from UW-Eau Claire, where he formulated his own minor in biological public relations, because of his varied course work from the University of Alaska, UW-Stevens Point, UW-Superior and UW-Eau Claire. His work experiences include managing a retail store, a fertilizer consultant and a DNR boat inspector in Spooner. Fishing, boating, canoeing, hiking and swimming are some of his present recreational interests. Justin believes being a Water Guard is a great way to educate the public and also hear what they want in terms of caring for the environment. Justin has been stationed in Eau Claire since 2008, in the West Central Region.



YING XIONG has a biology/chemistry degree from Eastern Michigan University. He has as his goal to someday work in a medical profession, fisheries research, or forestry. He hopes to contribute to natural resources restoration and conservation throughout his career. His outdoors passions include camping, fishing and hiking. He also enjoys sports, movies and music. He lives in Milwaukee and is stationed in Waukesha in the Southeast Region for 2010.

A LIMITED TERM EMPLOYEE: 1043 HOURS

The Water Guards are limited to 1043 hours of work per year. Each deputy is able to apply for other positions, such as a Traditional Fish and Game Deputy Warden during the gun deer season, or other hunting season openers. Those hours are charged to a different budget, and are treated as a separate position, not part of a Water Guard's position allowing an employee to put in more hours; in this case more time protecting our natural resources.

GREG STACEY was part of the initial Water Guard program in 2008 and continues to coordinate the program for the DNR. His career with the Department began in 1990, first as the South Central Region Chief Pilot, then Chief Pilot/Aeronautics, and then DNR Aviation Manager. Greg graduated from the DNR warden law enforcement academy in 1995, becoming a Warden with wings, so to speak. Prior to working for Wisconsin, Greg was an Airline Captain for Air Midwest, a Trans World Airlines subsidiary. His love of flying began while he was serving his second tour in Viet Nam as a Crew Chief/Door Gunner on a Huey helicopter.



He began his initial flight training in 1968, after his first military obligation. Greg earned numerous FAA pilot ratings and began a full time aviation career, accumulating more than 15,000 flight hours. After these aviation careers, Greg switched to public education and enforcement of aquatic invasive species, because of his concern for the environment, particularly inland water ecology. Even though officially retired, he continues to work as a Deputy Warden Water Guard and plans to do so well into the foreseeable future.



New Water Guard Bill Her, discusses aquatic invasives with these boaters.

Deputy Warden Water Guard Greg Stacey shows invasive specimens and shares our concerns.



Photo by Jerry Davis

Interested in helping spread the word to your group or organization, and at your festival or tournament? contact:

Greg Stacey at 608-576-9123 or gregory.stacey@wisconsin.gov

For information about the Water Guard Program and/or scheduling Aquatic Invasive presentations for your group or organization, or for a Water Guard presence at a festival or tournament etc., give Greg a call.

For information about required qualifications, and the Water Guard hiring process contact Sherry Van Haren 608-266-2174 or sherry.vanharen@wisconsin.gov



Can we "Lure" you in to considering becoming a Conservation Warden, Deputy Warden or Water Guard?

The Bureau of Law Enforcement Mission is to protect, enhance and promote the safe and wise use of our natural resources through enforcement, education and community based wardening that guarantees fair and equal treatment.



More information about a career as a Conservation Warden can be found at the following website.

www.dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/recruit.html

